

VZCZCXRO9658

RR RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRS RUEHTM
DE RUEHME #2239/01 2102310
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 292310Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7653
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RHMFIS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFIS/HQ USNORTHCOM
RHMFIS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 002239

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/22/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR MX

SUBJECT: GREEN PARTY LOOKS TO CONSOLIDATE ELECTORAL GAINS
IN MEXICO DESPITE OBSTACLES

REF: A. MEXICO 1758

1B. MEXICO 2126

Classified By: Charge John D. Feeley. Reasons: 1.4 (b and d).

11. (C) Summary: The Green Party of Mexico (PVEM) will look to consolidate significant gains it made in the July 5 midterm elections in a bid to expand its reach in 2012. Over the next three years in Congress, the party will endeavor to implement its campaign promises and push environmental legislation. In the immediate aftermath of the elections, it forged an alliance with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the Chamber of Deputies, giving the two a majority in the Mexican Congress' lower house. At the same time, PVEM claims that it will maintain its independence and work with other parties for the benefit of the country. Despite its rhetoric, analysts question the party's tactics during the election and even its commitment to the environment. They also question how successfully the party will be in completing its agenda. Few can question, however, that the party's success in the recent elections will lend it a higher profile in political debates over the coming Congressional term. End Summary.

Green Party Electoral Gains

12. (C) The Green Party of Mexico (PVEM) has every reason to be pleased with its performance in the midterm elections July 5 (ref. A). The party won almost 7 percent of the national vote, giving it 22 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, up from 17. Outgoing Federal Deputy and Green Party Communications Secretary Jesus Sesma told Poloff that "everything went right" for the party in the elections. With over 2.3 million votes, Sesma boasted that his party is the second strongest Green party in the world after Germany's. According to Sesma, PVEM beat the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) in 15 States and won ten percent of the vote in the Federal District, securing as many as five of the 66 slots in the local assembly. Juan Pardinas, an analyst with the Mexican Competitiveness Institute, noted that the party placed third in half of Mexico's states, including those states facing the most dire security threats.

Alliance with the PRI

13. (C) In view of the fact that PVEM and PRI ran on a joint ticket in over 60 Congressional districts in the recent election, it took few observers by surprise when PVEM President Jorge Emilio Gonzalez and PRI President Beatriz

Paredes agreed July 19 to form an alliance (ref. B). PVEM will contribute its 22 seats to PRI's 237, giving the alliance an absolute majority in the 500 seat Chamber of Deputies. Sesma said that PVEM will coordinate with the PRI in the Chamber on agenda items of common concern related to economic, social, and security issues. He emphasized, however, that PVEM will remain independent on other issues, including its principal campaign pledge to reinstate the death penalty. It will continue to form coalitions with other parties on legislation it believes advances the interests of the country and its political fortunes. (Note: PRI interlocutors have told us that their party will not support the death penalty proposal. End Note.) Solidifying ties to the PRI, Party President Gonzalez announced July 21 that PVEM Deputy-elect Juan Jose Guerra Abud, a close confidant of PRI State of Mexico Governor Enrique Pena Nieto, will lead the PVEM in the Chamber.

Green Party Priorities

¶4. (C) According to Sesma, PVEM has three priorities. First, it hopes to implement all of its campaign promises by the end of the first legislative session. These include improving public health programs and providing free courses in English and computing to all Mexicans, in addition to reinstating the death penalty for murder and kidnapping. He said that the party will need cooperation from the PRI, PRD and ruling National Action Party (PAN) to achieve this goal. Second, PVEM plans to introduce a series of environmental initiatives. Sesma believes that PAN's defeat in the midterm

MEXICO 00002239 002 OF 003

elections will force President Felipe Calderon to work more closely with the other parties in Congress on a broad array of issues, which will give the PVEM an opening to promote environmental causes. Finally, Sesma told Poloff that PVEM looks to increase its national presence to address the fact that the party was only able to rally enough volunteers to monitor about 30 percent of polling stations across the country on election day.

¶5. (C) Sesma told Poloff that PVEM also planned in the next legislative session to propose reforms to the electoral law that would enable the smaller parties to receive greater public financing. PVEM objects to the current electoral law that limits advertising and private funding of electoral campaigns. Sesma complained that the PRD had received three times more TV and radio air time than PVEM during the recent campaign. The 2007 electoral reforms also benefited the PRI relative to the PAN, which used to have an advantage with the media. Given PVEM's alleged ties to Mexican media -- according to press reports, six of the newly elected lawmakers in the Chamber of Deputies from the PVEM represent the interests of the two most powerful television companies, Televisa and TV Azteca -- such a reform effort may also represent the interests of major media to increase advertising time and revenues in the next elections. PRI contacts have told Poloff that the party is suspicious of PVEM's ties to the media and is highly unlikely to support PVEM electoral reform proposals.

But Just How Green Are They?

¶6. (C) Given its recent electoral gains, the Green Party has drawn increased scrutiny, including criticism of how it ran its campaign and questions about its commitment to the environment. In a feature article in a major Mexico City daily, Raul Trejo Delarbre of the Institute of Social Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) accused PVEM of abandoning the liberal and progressive ideology of other Green parties in favor of a conservative doctrine. He also criticized the party's "disturbing" methods of manipulating propaganda and society, which he claimed are reminiscent of fascist Italy. (Note: PVEM was

expelled from the European coalition of Green parties early this year for its advocacy of the death penalty. End Note.) In the same article, other observers asserted that the party is tantamount to a family franchise, controlled by the family of its founder, ex-Priista Jorge Gonzalez Torres, and the Gonzalez Martinez family. Patricia Arendar of Greenpeace in Mexico reportedly described the Green Party as a "chameleon" because it demonstrates little follow through on environmental legislation proposed by the NGO community and instead places a greater emphasis on voting in accordance with its political alliances. In response to this criticism, Sesma told Poloff that 95 percent of environmental legislation proposed in Congress emanated from the Green Party.

¶7. (C) Comment: Given its noteworthy gains in the recent elections, PVEM has successfully raised its profile as a player in the Mexican legislature. Despite the increase in influence, however, it is very unlikely that the Green Party will be able to deliver on its campaign promises in the first session of Congress, or during the entire legislative period.

For example, no other party has indicated a willingness to back death penalty reinstatement, and political analysts have criticized PVEM's proposals on health and education as either impractical or financially unviable. Moreover, the party's shallow three-point political platform was cleverly designed for campaign purposes, but lacks any ideological grounding necessary for the PVEM to become a sustained, major player in Mexican politics. The PRI may also tire of its loose alliance with PVEM should it prove an unreliable partner on key issues or opportunistic in forging even shakier alliances with other parties on specific issues.

¶8. (C) Comment (cont.): The PVEM may be able to regain some credibility on environmental issues if it introduces some respectable environmental initiatives, particularly since the party may be able to count on support from President Calderon. Calderon has focused on environmental objectives during his tenure, and his Minister of Environment and

MEXICO 00002239 003 OF 003

Natural Resources, Juan Rafael Elvira, reportedly conceded that PVEM has supported some of the administration's proposals. PVEM's ties to the media should keep the party in the public eye. At some point, however, it will need to deliver results on its less-than-realistic promises, or convince the public that other political parties stood in the way of its objectives. In either case, it will remain a "party for rent," opportunistically casting its lines for the political it thinks will best serve its electoral agenda, not its eponymous environmental one. End Comment.

Visit Mexico City's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity> and the North American Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>

FEELEY